

brow of the hill near his Nazareth home.

But we turn another page of the history over, and now we come to the closing scenes of his life. Having instituted ordinances for the observance of his followers for all coming time, and having given earnest loving words of comfort and counsel to his disciples, we find him arraigned before one tribunal after another, and at last condemned to die a cruel and shameful death, by crucifixion, even though neither Pilate nor Herod could find any fault in him. He was a victim of Jewish hate and rage, and not a criminal suffering for his guilt. He died the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, even as Caiaphas declared, It is expedient that one should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish.

As his birth was attended by extraordinary manifestations so was his death. When the suffering, bleeding Christ hung upon Calvary, every nerve trembling, thrilling and quivering with pain, his sorrowing mother and loving friends weeping in the distance, nature showed her sympathy by veiling her face in darkness for three hours. For three hours the darkness of night hung over Calvary, and at the ninth hour, when the suffering Son of God commended his spirit into the hands of his Father and gave up the ghost, the vail of the temple, separating the holy from the most holy place, was torn from top to bottom, which to the Jews must have been a most extraordinary manifestation. The earth was convulsed as with an earthquake, rocks were rent, and graves opened, so that many bodies of the saints arose. Was there ever another death like that? Did nature ever tremble and hide her face in grief at another man's death?

Moses, the great Lawgiver who stood on Mt. Sinai and talked with God, David the man after God's own heart, and Daniel the good old prophet who was cast into the den of lions rather than worship the golden image in Dura all died, but never was the vail of the temple torn, nor graves opened until God's own Son died.

Two more notable events and the history is complete. Jesus was laid in Joseph's new rock hewn tomb, and a great stone rolled to the door, but the

sealed sepulcher could not hold him. An angel opened the door, Jesus burst the bars of death, burst the icy fetters binding him, and came forth, once more gathering his little band of disciples around him.

A brief sojourn of forty days, and once again the hearts of his followers are filled with astonishment, for Jesus leads them out as far as Bethany, and there standing in the midst of them he lifts up his hands and blesses them, and even while he is blessing them he is taken from them, a cloud receives him out of their sight, and he is carried up to heaven, back to the bosom of the Father; and once again, I think the joy bells of heaven rang, and the Father rejoiced, and the angels made all heaven ring with their hallelujahs, when the pearly gates opened, and Jesus entered, the great work of redemption completed, and salvation made possible for all men. Such is briefly stated, the Gospel history of Christ. And now what think ye of Christ? We have shown you the Christ of the Bible in the light of promise, of prophecy, and Gospel history, and now what think ye of him?

When this question was addressed to the Pharisees by the Saviour himself, they answered that he was the Son of David. True he was the Son of David by lineal descent, through his mother. But let us hear what the Father saith: "This is *my* beloved Son." He was the Son of Mary, the reputed son of Joseph, by lineal descent the son of David, but he was more than that; for as the multitudes stood on the banks of the Jordan and Jesus came up out of the water, of baptism, a voice from the Father in heaven, proclaimed "This is *my* beloved son."

When Christ's death was attended by such extraordinary manifestations, and wonders, the Roman Centurion who stood near said, "Truly, this was the son of God." Nicodemus, his secret disciple who came to him by night, confessed, "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles, except God be with him." When Jesus questioned his disciples, Peter, the spokesman, quickly replied "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The officers whom the Pharisees and chief priests sent to arrest Jesus returned without having

laid hands on him, and answered, "Never man spake like this man."

That Jesus Christ was the Son of God, it has perhaps never occurred to us to doubt, but it has been doubted by some in all ages. He has been held up by some as a man of infinite purity, holiness, and beauty of character, but as only a man, a man holier, and purer than other men, but yet only a man. This Jesus, whose coming had been promised in the infancy of the human race, whose birth had long been foretold, whose childhood was spotless, whose wisdom at twelve surprised and amazed the lawyers and doctors, whose life was a loving ministry and one great miracle, who never performed a miracle merely to satisfy the curiosity of the people, or to show his power, and gratify selfish ends, but whose manifestations of miraculous power were always for a beneficent end that should benefit and bless, whose death was attended by extraordinary demonstrations of nature, whose grave was opened by an angel, and who was received in the bosom of a cloud and carried up into heaven from the midst of his followers—this Jesus has by some been regarded as a mere man.

Others have regarded him as an impostor. Some have dared to say that this Jesus whose whole ministry was spent in blessing others, in healing the sick, in pouring the oil of joy and consolation into the hearts of the sorrow-laden,—this Jesus who brought into the world a saving Gospel, a doctrine "beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God," this Jesus who gave himself for man, that he might redeem him from the awful consequences of sin, whose dominion is spreading from sea to sea,—some have dared to say that he was an impostor, that he imposed upon the credulity of the ignorant Jews who were his followers. What think ye my friends? Could a man whose birth was a miracle and attended by divine manifestations, whose whole life was a fulfillment of prophecies uttered by a succession of men, during four thousand years, whose death and resurrection and ascension were wonderful in themselves, and accompanied by wonders—could such a character be a mere man? And when such a character lives a life that seeks